Gotta Love Him

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by Sparcina

Summary

Hannibal spends the first parent meeting firing cannibal puns, to Will's half-hearted amusement (and profound exasperation).
Nothing too serious here.

The private high school of New York provided everything an intellectual, artistic and high-class parent could wish for his child. It was far from cheap—which had been a prerequisite —, girls only—another mandatory element—and devoted three periods per week to music and cooking classes—actually the decisive factor here, as Hannibal Lecter had wanted their daughter to shine amongst her pairs. At eight years old, Abigail Lecter-Graham certainly knew how to attract appreciative attention, and Will, her other adoptive and caring father, held no doubt about the origin of this charisma.

“I will,” Hannibal said with assurance, opening the front door of the school before stepping aside to let his lover in. Always the perfect gentleman, displaying manners that would have put a priest to shame… except in the areas of flesh and meat, of course. Will tried not to think too hard about the graphic and arousing details of their last hunt, but he failed lamentably and blushed. Fortunately, he had a very real and present conversation to turn him mind to.

“No, you won’t,” he retorted, furrowing over his fading blush. “This is the first parent meeting in this school, in our fifth city since January. If you hadn’t let that fingerprint in Firenze…”

“You distracted me.”

“*I* distracted *you*?” Will couldn’t keep the surprise out of his voice. “*You* were the one to shove me to my-”

Hannibal backed him up against the wall so fast Will’s breath itched. The proximity gave him goosebumps, and the fact that he knew that Hannibal knew of his effect on him only heated the shivers.

“Please mind your words in the school, William,” Hannibal said in a languid tone, crowding him some more.

Will had a hundred arguments ready to fight back, and he was torn between a half-dozen responses including kissing his lover, punching him in the chest and ending his interrupted sentence, when a couple of parents entered the school right behind him.

Hannibal was instantly back in the middle of the hall, a hand extended to Will. His eyes gleamed as he spoke.

“Shall we?”

Will’s eyes narrowed to slits.

“Yes, we *shall*, and you will hold your tongue too.”

Hannibal answered with that particular glance of disapproval that Will had come to recognize as disguised affection. He intertwined his fingers with his lover’s and let him lead them to their daughter’s classroom, where their main teacher awaited their visit.

Mrs. Wilson—a great name, in Will's opinion—was a small and tiny woman with long curly red hair and big round glasses. His empathy confirmed Abigail's appreciation of the woman: nice and witty, imaginative and open-minded. She smiled to the two men and introduced herself. Her handshake was gentle but firm. Will smiled back, definitively at ease. Red hair wouldn't be associated forever with sneaking and lying, apparently.

"I am happy you could come tonight," the teacher said, gesturing to the two leather chairs in front of the desk for them to sit. "I'm sorry it's so cool in the room, the problem will be dealt with by tomorrow morning."

"You could indeed hang dead meat in here," Hannibal commented in a polite voice while taking place on the left seat.

Will sat besides him and rolled his eyes. Of course Hannibal would say that, even though the man's tolerance to cold went far beyond the current room's temperature. He bit down on his lip not to snap at him, or better yet, do something even more regretful like stepping on his shinny shoes. Hannibal was so unpredictable sometimes—always, whispered a little voice in the back of his head—that Will wasn't sure if the punishment would rank as 'pleasurable' or 'unnerving'.

It was still worth considering.

"You like to twist the knife in the wound, Mr. Lecter," the teacher said with a wink. "I assure you this won't happen again."

"I have the impression this class is the perfect hunting ground…"

"For knowledge," Will promptly added, lest he banged his head on the nearest wall. "You have a lot of books in this class."

The teacher looked proud, and Hannibal the slightest bit annoyed. Will didn't expect him to let it go, and he didn't.

"I first thought about head hunting a private teacher for our daughter, but she seems satisfied enough with her classes here."

"I am happy to hear that. It sure is hard work to give the best to one's child."

"As if you're the only one bringing home the bacon," Will growled between clenched teeth.

Hannibal's crack of surprise in his well-made mask was worth the temporary surrender. Will jammed his hands in his coat pockets and looked around with interest. He would not give his lover the satisfaction to see him smile.

Hannibal wasted no time in retaliating. "Shall we get to the meat of the matter? I believe you mentioned that Abigail seemed to be on a knife-edge from time to time in the cooking classes?"

Mrs. Wilson nodded gravely. She grabbed a small notebook bound in leather on the edge of the desk and perused through the neat-written pages with her eyebrows drawn. All to her

concentration, she missed Will's almost face-palm.

Hannibal didn't miss it, and he relished it.

Will became incredibly more tempted to drag his lover outside the room and remind him that Abigail was tired of changing school—and country—every couple of months, and so was he. While it was true that he could work on boats in most countries, he hated to change his social circle in such spinning fashion.

Well… He *was* partly to fault for their constant change of home. After all, Hannibal wasn't cutting humans to shreds alone anymore, and neither was he having brutal and mind-blowing sex on his own on their crime scenes.

Will winced. Hannibal shot him a triumphant glance before brushing his wrist with his thumb. Tenderness, mixed with satisfaction.

"Not everybody learns at the same rhythm," Mrs. Wilson said, eyes fixed on her notebook.

"Some skills take longer to master then others," Hannibal agreed.

And wasn't he right about that…

*

Will thought back to the first time he had carved open a human's chest under Hannibal's supervision. No, not supervision: adoration. But he was still on the learning curve then.

"You have no idea how beautiful it is to watch you work," Hannibal had said, embracing him from behind.

Will's eyes had fluttered close at the contact. The blood had felt warm on his palms, but Hannibal was warmer. He had arched his back into him and sighed in bliss as the deft hands he had come to know so well started to trace sensuous patterns on his hips. He had jerked backwards, unable to help himself. From the very beginning, Hannibal had been his mentor, for all things artistic, luxurious, deadly and erotic. He had also been the one to mingle the four in many, many different ways.

Will remembered their first *banquet* on blood with something akin to shyness. He had been so enthusiastic then, edging on careless. It had been Hannibal who had to teach him ground rules and limits so that their pleasure could bring on more pleasure, and not trouble.

These days, it was more the other way around. Will knew his lover hadn't gone careless – a careless Hannibal hadn't set foot on this Earth yet –, but this new interest in risky behaviors had definitive drawbacks.

"Abigail is doing incredibly well in her cooking class," the teacher said, bringing him out of his reveries. Hannibal spared him an askance look, to which Will answered with a shrug. "The art with which she prepares dishes… She is naturally gifted, isn't she?"

That was meant sincerely, Will could tell. He would also have to be blind to miss Hannibal's pride. The fleeting emotion didn't stay long on his lover's features, but Will could make do with little hints, and what had transpired on the handsome face amounted to a shouted declaration as far as he was concerned.

Hannibal brushed an invisible speck of dust off his coat.

"We raised her to be the best in what she likes," he said suavely.

"That you certainly did," Mrs. Wilson agreed. "It is unfortunate that she doesn't like science as well as cooking…"

Will could only stare as Hannibal went from utterly still to completely motionless – a subtle feat he only could decipher as the surprise it really was.

"She has difficulties in sciences?" Will said. He had heard correctly, but it didn't sound right– Abigail had done quite well over the last semester. He had seen her homework himself! He exchanged a look with Hannibal.

"Did she miss classes, by any chance?"

Mrs. Wilson licked her lower lip. Will knew well enough how Hannibal's gazes could be too intense for one little human body.

"She might have. Teachers can't remember her not being here, but there are clues…"

"We will look into it," Hannibal said, not a feature out of place, not a hair greyer by the news. "Thank you for your time."

Back at their place, Will followed Hannibal in the kitchen. Abigail greeted them with a huge smile, and they took turn hugging her. Will chose to follow Hannibal's lead and didn't say a word about what the teacher had told them. Abigail didn't look worried, Hannibal didn't look worried–it wouldn't do for him to break the pattern. But it was hard, and kept getting harder over the preparations of the evening meal.

"We need to talk."

Hannibal went on chopping onions. Will closed the door to the kitchen, sending a reassuring wave to an intrigued Abigail.

"She doesn't have any problem in sciences," he said in clipped tones, arms crossed.

"She doesn't," Hannibal agreed. "We would have noticed."

"Then what is wrong?"

"Does something have to be wrong?"

If looks could kill, Hannibal would have turned to dust on the very counter he kept on polishing.

“Will…”

“Don’t you dare *Will* me. Stark talking. Now.”

Hannibal’s hands were suddenly on his hips, said hips plastered to the counter. The motion was so swift Will could have sworn he hadn’t moved at all.

“If you think about it, you will know what’s going on.”

Amusement–and a hint of anger–was darkening Hannibal’s eyes. Will swallowed, half turned-on, half annoyed.

“It has begun,” he said, understanding hitting him.

Hannibal nodded. “I expected it for some time now. She is bright, our Abigail; she would have picked the clues.”

“And your subtlety.”

“And your wish to impress. This is no dead-end, Will: she is more careful than we will ever be.”

Hannibal cupped his chin, bit his lower lip in just the right way to get a moan out of Will, before turning his head to the side.

Abigail was leaning in the doorway, hands clasped in front of her, a doll hesitating before her first ballet.

“I certainly feel like a fish out of water,” she chimed, smile unsure. “That discussion could have turned into a fine kettle of fish.”

“Don’t you have bigger fish to fry?” Will replied in spite of himself.

Hannibal smiled fondly at him. The kiss he gave him was all tenderness and approval. Abigail sighed in relief and walked to them–like Hannibal, she couldn’t run even if her life depended on it, not graceful enough–and wrapped her slender arms around them both. A laugh bubbled in her chest.

“My first prize will be for you, daddy.”

“Under our supervision.”

Hannibal’s tone was steel. Abigail’s response was to melt gloriously.

“I would never kill the fun for you, papa. I’ve only been practicing for now. I know it is our secret.”

Will shuddered. In some past far, far away, disgust would have torn his mind and belly. Maybe he would have thrown up–as a matter of fact, he did, at least twice. Now, however, it was resignation that prompted his next words.

“Practice makes perfect indeed.”

And didn’t his lover and child look smug at that mention. Will kissed them both and wondered at his little killer-and-cannibal family, his heart full of ever-growing love.

“Let’s not waste our longpig, then. Do you wish to do the honors, Abigail?”

And the little girl climbed on the high chair, grabbed the knife his father had been using, and cut into the organs of some inconsiderate neighbor.

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